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American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

MANUAL

FOR

Women engaging in Foreign Missionary Work.

PRINTED FOR THE BOARD:

BEACON PRESS, THOS. TODD, CONGREGATIONAL HOUSE, BOSTON.

1889.

MANUAL.

THE remarkable growth of woman's work in the foreign field and the large number of Christian women who, in connection with the Woman's Boards, are devoting themselves to this service in the different missions of the American Board and under its care and supervision, suggest the importance of a Manual that may define the qualifications of candidates, and their relations to the different Boards and to the missions of which they may become members.

This pamphlet is intended to be such a Manual for the use of women who wish to engage in missionary work, and for their guidance after their appointment as missionaries. It will serve instead of many written and verbal answers to inquiries which must otherwise be proposed to the Secretaries or Treasurer. It will always be presumed that candidates have made themselves acquainted with the contents of these pages, and that nothing need be repeated which is contained here.

I. *Missionary Candidates.*

An early decision to be a missionary will do no injury to one who may be providentially kept from engaging in the foreign service. The thought and hope of such service at some day will be a means of healthful discipline in Christian character. A sincere regard for duty and a resolute pursuit of it are far less likely to be injurious to one's usefulness than a timorous shrinking from responsibility. Qualifications and the opportunity may be regarded as constituting a call to the foreign field.

II. *Qualifications.*

Of these some are indispensable for *all* candidates for the missionary work, while others are especially requisite in certain departments of that work.

1. The same general qualifications are requisite which are justly esteemed as the conditions of success at home: an unimpaired physical constitution; good intellectual ability, well disciplined by education, and if possible by practical experience; good sense; sound judgment of men and things; versatility, tact, adaptation to all classes and circumstances — “sanctified common sense;” a cheerful, hopeful spirit, ability to work pleasantly with others; persistent energy in the carrying out of plans once begun — all controlled by a *single-hearted, self-sacrificing devotion to Christ and his cause.*

Mental powers and attainments of the highest order, executive ability and capacity for organizing and superintending, find ample scope in the missionary field. Though there are many helps to the acquisition of foreign languages not enjoyed by the early missionaries, facility in acquiring a foreign tongue is a valuable qualification; yet much depends on the persistent purpose to master it. The candidate should sustain a good character among those who know her. Her standing should be such that when her intention is announced the common sentiment of those who know her will be that she is well qualified for the work.

2. As to the second class of qualifications, namely, special adaptations to a particular department of labor:

Those who expect to be engaged mainly in teaching should be thoroughly prepared by their intellectual attainments and discipline, and should have shown special fitness in actual service, by their success not only in the general work of teaching, but in *moulding character*, shaping the minds and hearts of their pupils.

A missionary physician should have what would in this country be esteemed a competent medical education; and she should be prepared and determined to make her professional knowledge and skill *directly subservient to the furtherance of the gospel.*

The foregoing qualifications are requisite in women, whether married or unmarried, who go out as missionaries, so far as they are applicable to their sphere of labor and their peculiar circumstances. Practical knowledge of domestic work, especially of the *culinary art*, is often of very great value. Indeed, there is no knowledge, or attainment, or practical experience of any sort, that may not be of service in the foreign field.

In all ordinary cases it is expected that those who become missionaries will consecrate themselves to this service for life.

III. Time and Manner of applying for an Appointment.

It is desirable that the offer of service should be made six months at least before the candidate expects to complete her preparation.

The offer should be written, and it should be addressed to the Secretaries, or if preferred, the application may be made through the Woman's Board. The candidate should give a brief history of herself, setting forth her age, residence, early education, habits, employments, religious experience, views and motives in desiring the missionary work, the department of labor in which she wishes to engage, and the field she prefers, if she has any preference, with the reasons therefor. She should state particularly whether she has a sound constitution and enjoys good health, or the contrary; whether she is in debt, or expects to be so when her studies are completed; and in short, any particulars respecting herself which she thinks the Committee ought to know in acting upon her offer of service. This paper should be drawn up with great frankness on the part of the candidate. She may expect that a corresponding frankness will be used toward herself. Acquaintance, personal or by correspondence, with members of some one of the Woman's Boards is specially desirable.

The offer of those who are to become the wives of missionaries is usually made through their intended husbands, but should cover the same ground with that

which is presented by single ladies, since wives of missionaries receive personal appointments as assistant missionaries.

IV. *Testimonials.*

The Prudential Committee regard it their duty, before appointing any person as a missionary of the Board, to obtain a thorough knowledge of her character and qualifications for the work to which she aspires. For this reason a personal acquaintance is sought in all cases where it is possible. In the first instance, however, written testimonials are obtained and sent on by the candidate. These should relate to the various points already noticed under the head of "qualifications."

The proper persons to furnish testimonials are the pastor, with the deacons or elders of the church to which the candidate belongs, or where she is best known as a Christian. If a physician, the persons with whom she pursued her professional studies should give her testimonials in regard to her proficiency therein.

It is desirable that others also who are well acquainted with the candidate should freely give their opinion as to her fitness for the work. An intelligent and pious woman in whose family she has resided, or who has otherwise become well acquainted with her, may give much valuable information. If educated at any academy, seminary, or college, there should be a letter from the principal of the institution. In every instance there should be an explicit statement as to health, and the testimony of the family physician should be obtained.

Those whose physical constitutions have been at any time seriously impaired, who have suffered from rheumatic complaints or affections of the spine, and especially for a long time from nervous prostration, or from difficulties peculiar to women, as a general rule, ought not to go abroad.

The more full, minute, and explicit these testimonials are, the better. They should be sealed by the writers and addressed to the Secretaries of the Board. Too much carefulness cannot be exercised by persons

called on to give testimonials, to be conscientiously faithful to their convictions, as a duty alike to the candidate and to the cause of Christ.

V. *Questions for Missionary Candidates.*

The following questions which missionary candidates are requested carefully to answer, though with all convenient brevity, in their offer of service, will show what is desired by the Prudential Committee :

1. What are your views respecting each of the leading doctrines of Scripture commonly held by the churches sustaining this Board? In answering this question, you may use your own language, or refer to any creeds of acknowledged weight, as to the doctrines contained in these creeds.

2. Have you any views at variance with these doctrines, or any views of church government which would prevent your cordial coöperation with the missionaries of this Board?

3. What leads you to think that *you* have been renewed by the Holy Spirit?

4. How long have you been a communicant in the church, and of what church are you now a member?

5. What leads you to desire foreign missionary service?

6. How do you regard hardship, suffering, and peril incurred in prosecuting the missionary work; and to what extent are you taking them into the account and preparing yourself to meet them?

7. What is your purpose relative to entering into the missionary work for life?

8. What is your age? What is your native place? Where has been your residence? In what business or employments have you been engaged?

9. What course of education have you pursued? Do you acquire languages easily? What knowledge have you of music?

10. What is the state of your health? Did you inherent a good constitution in all respects? Are you aware of being now, or of having been at any time,

subject to any bodily ailment or infirmity? Are your habits sedentary or active?

11. Are any near relatives to such a degree dependent on you, or likely to become so, that you are under obligations to make provision for their support?

12. Do you assent to the rules and regulations of the Board, or is there anything in its organization or rules, or in the organization or manner of conducting its missions, which you disapprove, or which would prevent your laboring cheerfully and happily under its direction, and in conformity with its regulations and those of the missions?

VI. *Under Appointment.*

The *appointment* and the *designation* are two distinct things. They need not be decided at the same time; and often they are not. The first will be decided as soon as possible after the necessary papers are complete; and the second as soon thereafter as circumstances will permit. The *designation* is always made as the result of a free conference with the missionary, and never in opposition to her expressed views and wishes. In respect to this matter, the interest of the missionary and of the Prudential Committee are the same.

The missionary engages, on accepting her appointment, to conform to the rules and regulations of the Board, the nature of which she is supposed distinctly to understand. She comes, moreover, under certain other distinct and well-understood pledges: (1.) As to her *manner of life*, which is to be one of exemplary piety and devotion to her work. (2.) As to her *teaching*, which must be conformed to the evangelical doctrines generally received by the churches sustaining the Board, and set forth in their well-known Confessions of Faith.

The salaries of missionaries begin on arriving upon a mission field. The Board does not pay the debts of missionaries contracted before their appointment, nor those which they contract afterward unless previously

authorized by the Committee. It is a standing usage not to pay any part of the expenses incurred in preparation for the work abroad. The allowance for the support of the missionary in the foreign field is not to be regarded, in any proper sense, as compensation for labor performed; nor is it graded to suit the varying abilities or success of different individuals, as in ordinary business occupations. The salaries asked by a mission for its different members, after consultation with them, and allowed by the Prudential Committee, are supposed to express what is necessary in the way of pecuniary support to their greatest efficiency and success. In one sense it is a grant in aid made by the churches at home through the Prudential Committee. It is desired that the missionary should be free from anxiety in regard to means of living, so as to leave heart and hand at liberty for the best possible service in the cause of Christ. Compensation for this service will be found in the fulfillment of a personal duty and privilege, and in the conscious presence and approbation of the Lord. Enlistment in the missionary enterprise is wholly voluntary, as well on the part of the missionary who goes abroad as on the part of her fellow Christians who remain at home. They are co-workers and mutual helpers. It is necessary for all to feel that they are discharging only their own personal obligations to the Head of the Church—that, under his eye, they are performing only their own appropriate work.

The fact should never be lost sight of that the Board and its Committee and officers have identically the same object in view and the same interest as the missionaries. Their object and their interest are nothing less than to render all the missions and missionaries in connection with the Board as useful as possible.

Before the appointment is made, the correspondence of the candidate is with the Secretary for the home department; afterward it is with the Secretary having charge of the foreign correspondence.

VII. *Outfit.*

The outfit of a missionary includes clothing, bedding, and all necessary furnishing for her own room, on arriving at her place of destination, and the necessary furnishing for housekeeping when two or more are to be associated. This will include furniture for a kitchen and a common sitting-room, besides bed-rooms for each.

It is desirable that the relatives and personal friends of the candidate should aid in furnishing outfit so far as able and disposed to do so, not only as contributing so much to the treasury of the Board, but also as a means of enlarging their interest in the work itself. Of course those parents who would have aided their children with funds to commence housekeeping will not withhold their aid because their children become missionaries to the heathen. Collections or subscriptions of money taken up for a missionary's outfit at a public meeting or outside of the circle of a missionary's personal friends are almost always inexpedient, and often lead to unwise expenditure, and, therefore, waste of mission funds. If ever made, in view of local interest excited, the sums raised should be regarded by the missionary as so much received for outfit, and they should be acknowledged accordingly. Thus acknowledged they help forward the general work.

Application should never be made to an auxiliary society for aid in procuring outfit, nor for an extra allowance beyond what is given by the Board. If the allowance made by the Board is not large enough, it ought to be increased. If it is sufficient, the auxiliary ought not to be requested to enlarge it. Besides, irregularities of this kind will lead to evils without end.

Well-made boxes of the medium size are ordinarily more convenient for clothing than trunks.¹ The boxes should be numbered, and a list made of every article contained in each.² Things to be used on the voyage

¹ Where the boxes are to be transported on horses any considerable distance, it is recommended that the length be 3 feet, the depth 1 foot and 6 inches, and the breadth 1 foot and 4 inches; and the gross weight of the box, when filled, should not exceed 160 pounds.

² A general statement of the contents of each box, as "clothing," "books," etc., and approximate value, should be furnished the forwarding agent, for custom house purposes and for insurance.

should be packed separately and marked accordingly; and everything should be forwarded to the place of embarkation in good season.

The varied articles of one's outfit, as furniture, books, etc., should be sent on some weeks in advance of the departure of the missionary, and such things should be taken with the missionary as are likely to be of use on the journey and for a limited time afterward, till goods sent forward may have arrived for use.

Necessary traveling expenses from one's home in this country preparatory to embarkation and the cost of passage are paid by the Board, and are not included in the outfit. The Treasurer is authorized to pay the freight of outfit to the place of destination to an amount not exceeding two tons, ship measurement, forty cubic feet to a ton, for one person going alone, or six tons for two who expect to keep house together.

By the rules of the Board, a missionary may receive aid from its funds for her outfit, when the assistance is needed, to the amount of \$250, and \$75 more, if required, for housekeeping expenses. At least \$50 of the outfit allowance should be reserved, to be expended after reaching the mission field.

IX. *Counsel as to Outfit.*

Become as well acquainted as possible with the character and peculiar circumstances of the field to which you are going. Advise when practicable with missionaries recently from that field, and then make out a list for yourself as the result of your own reflections. Every missionary securing such assistance as may be had from other missionaries, and from the Missionary Rooms, and exercising due thought on the subject, can form a satisfactory opinion as to what she will need. Consider the length of the journey, the countries to be passed through, and that no washing can be done at sea.

The number of articles to be used on the voyage should be as few as possible, yet sufficient, with a few extras for sickness. In warm weather more changes will be necessary than in cold.

Thick clothing, somewhat worn, will be found useful on shipboard and in traveling.

In determining what articles of clothing shall be taken for the voyage, and for use after reaching the field, proceed methodically, beginning with the outer garment, and note down how many will be needed — thick and thin, coarse and fine, woolen, cotton, etc.

As a general rule clothing should be warmer for winter and cooler for summer than in the same temperature in this country.

Mattresses and furniture will generally be procured at the place of embarkation.

The amount of furniture to be taken must be determined by the locality of the mission. Owing to the progress of commerce, etc., less and less need be taken every year.

In making the purchases, see at every step that you are not running beyond your available means. If you are, you may be sure you are planning on too large a scale.

As a general rule, the articles to be obtained at the place of the missionary's residence in this country are those which are manufactured by the needle. Such articles, made among friends, are better than those which are found ready made in cities. Donations in stockings, shoes, etc., should also be thankfully received, and whatever other needful articles can be packed in a small space. But bulky articles, and also heavy articles, unless the place of embarkation is near, should be procured at that place, the freight being a serious addition to the first cost. Bring a list, fairly written, of all the articles obtained. Clothing should all be marked with the name of the owner.

Bear in mind that freight is always paid on the outfit, thus greatly increasing the cost of bulky articles, before they reach their foreign destination; and as the charge for freight is by measurement (cubic feet), great care should be taken to pack goods, especially furniture, in the smallest possible compass. Many articles should be taken to pieces before being packed.

It is no longer true, in respect to any mission, that

an outfit of clothing, etc., should be procured for several years. Fresh supplies can now be readily ordered from home or obtained abroad.

A competent person will be found at the Missionary Rooms in Boston to advise the missionaries in the purchase of articles of outfit, and to conduct them to places where these articles can be advantageously procured.

Experience has shown that it is well for missionaries to be assisted only so far as may be necessary to enable them to be in readiness on the day of embarkation; and it is better, on all accounts, that *they* should purchase the articles, and pack at least their clothing and bedding. They are then better satisfied, and they know where to look for what they want.

A full and accurate account should be kept of the manner in which all moneys received from the treasury of the Board have been expended, noting particularly what is for traveling expenses and what for outfit.

A settlement of accounts should be made with the Treasurer before embarkation. Funds will then be furnished by him for the journey to the mission station, and a careful account of all disbursements of such moneys should be kept and promptly sent back on reaching the field. Any balance unexpended should be reported to the mission Treasurer, and generally should be placed in his hands.

The outfit of a missionary, with the exception of wearing apparel, is regarded as the property of the Board, so far as purchased by its funds; and in case of a missionary retiring from the field within a limited period, as five years, for other cause than failure of health, it is expected that an equitable return will be made to the Board — due regard being had to expenses incurred and services rendered.

Confer with the Secretaries of the Board in reference to a passport, and the necessary instructions will be given. In some cases a passport is not required.

A few choice books, well selected, are better than many for a private library. Books and periodicals can always be ordered, as needed, through the Missionary Rooms.

When once the question of going abroad is settled, thoughtfully and prayerfully, it is better to avoid all wearisome and exhaustive discussions of the matter with one's friends. Other topics are then in order. Experience has shown that short farewell visits are the most satisfactory in the end.

The missionary from the time of her appointment should be careful to keep the Secretary who has the correspondence with her informed where letters will find her in the shortest possible time. The missionary should have a season of rest before leaving, so as to start in the best condition. Too much hurry at the last often stands in the way of enjoying the journey, and stands in the way of the best health on entering the mission field. Let vaccination be renewed so as to avoid any danger on the way or after arriving. Missionaries are expected to care conscientiously for their health, taking such rest and vacations in the vicinity of their missionary fields as are necessary for this purpose. Occasionally a visit to the United States may be desirable, but *no fixed period of labor abroad entitles a missionary to such a furlough.* The circumstances of different individuals are so unlike, and the differences of climate are such, that each case must be judged of according to its necessity, always with a wise reference to the best interests of the missionary cause at home and abroad.

X. *Relations to the American Board and to Woman's Boards.*

All missionaries are appointed and designated to their several fields of labor by the Prudential Committee of the American Board. Woman's work is thus made an integral part of the entire work committed to the Board, while unity, just proportion, and harmony of action are secured. Those candidates with whom, through correspondence or personally, either of the Woman's Boards has become acquainted, and whom the Prudential Committee of the A. B. C. F. M. shall appoint, are usually adopted by one of the Woman's

Boards. By this connection they sustain peculiarly close and affectionate relations with a large number of their sisters at home, and mutual regard, sympathy, and interest of the greatest value on both sides are developed. The pecuniary support of these missionaries is secured by that particular Board with which the special connection exists, though they receive their salaries through the treasury of the American Board. Wives of missionaries also are sometimes thus adopted.

XI. *In the Field.*

Women, married or unmarried, are members of the mission and of the station where they reside. Their work is a part of the mission work, and in all mission arrangements is to be considered equally with other work.

The general care and responsibility for the station, naturally and by the rules of the Board, devolve upon the men. The general care of the schools and seminaries; as to where they shall be established and how conducted; the terms of admission and charges for tuition and board; the salaries of employés, whether teachers or others; the style of living, etc., are to be determined by the station in accordance with the policy of the Board and of the mission. Women engaged in other kinds of work than teaching will arrange their plans in conference with the station, and be governed by the judgment of the station. When women wish to be absent on tours or for other reasons, as in the case of men, the station is to be consulted and its approval obtained. Women are to present to the station plans for their work, estimates of expenses, and reports, in the same manner as other members of the station. In the consideration of questions touching their own work the unmarried women of a mission and a station are to have an equal voice with the men.

Matters of detail in the work assigned to women, the arrangement of classes in the schools, and the like — while advice and assistance may be asked about these — are committed to the women in charge, as to

men it is committed to arrange and order the details of their specific work. In all these respects institutions in charge of women and of men are on precisely the same basis, whether the institutions are under trustees or otherwise.

In case of differences of opinion as to the conduct of their work, women have the same right with men of appeal to the mission in the first instance, and later, if need be, to the Prudential Committee, and always of reference to the Secretaries of the American Board.

Unmarried ladies will make their own arrangements as to boarding in some missionary family or keeping house for themselves. When two or more can unite in keeping house it is deemed the better way, as giving more independence.

XII. *Pecuniary Relations.*

As the Prudential Committee, in making the annual appropriations, aims to give to all the missions and missionaries a just proportion of the means at its disposal, and distributes according to estimates carefully prepared and duly submitted to it by the different missions, it is incumbent on all missionaries to accept the arrangement made by the Prudential Committee, and not to make special appeals for objects outside of the regular appropriations. If there is occasion to ask for more than has been allowed, representation should be made, with the consent of the mission or station, to the Prudential Committee of the American Board, through one of the Secretaries of that Board, or through the Executive Committee of the Woman's Boards, but not to their branches or auxiliaries, nor to churches, Sabbath-schools, or individual Christians. Such a rule is necessary to prevent jealousies in the field, to secure the wisest use of missionary funds, and the necessary means to carry on the regular work in hand.

The missionary is to keep her personal account wholly separate from the mission account of the work in her charge, and is not to overdraw in either except in extraordinary emergencies, and then only with the approval of the station. In case of extraordinary ex-

penses, owing to sickness or other providential reasons, a special grant should be asked, so as to prevent any indebtedness at the end of a year.

It is not expected that the salary of a missionary will enable her to assume the support of pupils in school, nor is it wise for her to do so, or to limit herself in necessary comforts in order to the larger exercise of charity. If a missionary has private funds of her own to use, the greatest carefulness is required not to do harm to the work itself or to compromise other missionaries less favored. It is better that such funds be applied toward her own salary or for the regular work committed to her. On no account is a missionary to adopt a native child.

XIII. *Correspondence.*

Missionaries supported by the Woman's Boards are expected, in addition to their regular correspondence with and their reports to the Foreign Secretary of the A. B. C. F. M., to be in correspondence with the Board by which they have been adopted, and to keep said Board informed of the condition and progress of the work under their care. Much can be done by such correspondence to awaken and sustain a hearty interest in the work, and to secure funds for its support and enlargement; and such assistance is greatly desired. But no missionary should sacrifice regular hours of exercise and sleep for the sake of correspondence or for any other work. The lines of duty run parallel; and there is time for every duty in a well-ordered arrangement of labor.

XIV. *Returned Missionaries.*

The same spirit of consecration to Christ which leads the missionary to go abroad will also lead one to seek a season of rest and recreation when necessary to the best interests of the cause; and such a season of rest can be secured by an application to the Prudential Committee, duly indorsed by the mission, as best acquainted with the case and interested in the welfare of its members.